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NOTES ON THE CASTRATION OF IDIOT CHILDREN.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY AND BRIEF ABSTRACTS.

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PICKERING, Races of Man, p. 153.

Dr. Robert Boal read before the Illinois State Medical Society a paper under the title "Emasculation and Ovariectomy as a Penalty for Crime and the Reformation of Criminals."—*Jour. Am. Med. Association*, Sept., 1895.

Dr. A. Laphorn Smith, Montreal, Can., reports the case of Miss X., age 25, ovaries and tubes removed 7 years ago. Still has the same sexual feeling as before and indulges excessively.

Dr. E. J. Munroe, of Bordeaux, reports observations in two cases of ovariectomy in young women, which showed an effect on the voice exactly the opposite of what is brought about in the male by castration. The higher notes were lost and the voice fell from soprano to mezzo-soprano.—*Boston Med. and Surg. Jour.*

In a paper entitled "The Crimes of Medical Men," in the Medical Herald for June, 1896, Dr. W. O. Henry mentions as one crime the failure to urge legislation to prevent marriage of criminals or to have them castrated.—*Record*, Sept., 1896.

In the Annals of Surgery, Sept., 1896, Dr. A. T. Cabot discusses the question of "Castration for Enlarged Prostate," in which the writer takes, on the whole, an unfavorable view of the operation as compared with the older one of prostatectomy. Dr. White, one of the editors of the Annual, combats some of his conclusions. "The large proportion of cases mentioned by Dr. Cabot in which mental disturbance followed the operation is noteworthy, even if it is not directly attributable to the operation." A large mortality has followed the operation of castration in the aged for enlarged prostate.

Dr. Pilcher, Supt. of the Institute for Imbeciles and Weak Minded Children, at Winfield, Kan., has been bitterly denounced

by newspapers in Winfield and Topeka for castrating several boys, inmates, who were confirmed masturbators. His predecessor, Dr. Wile, had treated these boys five years without benefit, and Dr. Pilcher, taking a rational view of the subject, performed the operation for the same reason that he would perform any other surgical operation—for its curative effect. There is a strong probability that he will be indicted for mayhem, to the everlasting disgrace of the civilization of the nineteenth century.—*Texas Med. Jour.*

The House Committee on Public Health of the Kansas Legislature has made a favorable report on the bill which does away with the penitentiary sentence for men convicted of assaulting women, and substitutes castration. The Social Purity League of Topeka has been urging the passage of this bill, and the leaders of the league claim enough votes in both houses to pass it, and have secured the promise of Gov. Leedy's signature. They say that following the lead of Kansas, ten other States will pass the same law at their next session of legislature.—*Med. Record.*

"Castration in cases of sexual perversion and for habitual criminals has been revived in able papers read before the Chicago Medico-Legal Society, by Daniel, of Texas, and Way, of the Elmira Reformatory. The arguments advanced did not receive a very cordial endorsement from the members present, and the possibility of the adoption of the measure advocated is slight. It is too radical a change to be made in a hurry, and the fact must not be lost sight of that any such experimentation is contrary to the laws of nature and will receive almost universal condemnation."—*Cutting.*

A writer in the London *Lancet* gives us some information on the subject of the demand and supply of eunuchs in China. The emperor and certain members of the royal family are alone entitled to keep eunuchs. His majesty maintains at least 2,000, but no prince of the blood or imperial princess has a right to more than 30. In the production of Chinese eunuchs four chief factors prevail, viz.: greed, predilection, poverty and laziness. Many parents sell their male children to the mutilators, or themselves castrate them in the hope of eventually sharing their earnings. Both penis and scrotum are removed by a single sweep of the operator's knife or scissors. A small piece of wood or pewter is inserted into the open urethra and the wound washed with pepper and water. The patient is then walked for three hours without rest, and for the following three days he is allowed no drink, while the plug fills the urethra. On the fourth day the plug is removed and if the urine flows he is looked upon as cured; but, should the overstrained bladder refuse to act, he is left to die. Fatal cases amount to about three per cent.

“ In Siluria boys are castrated in a certain village and dressed in women’s clothes.”—*Uncertain authority.*

Hammond refers to castration as a religious ceremony in New Mexico.

There is a wide-spread belief that squirrels castrate each other, but after reading much pro and con I feel pretty well satisfied that the very frequent cases where the testicles are missing is due to a parasitic disease which destroys the gland.

Dr. Edmund Andrews, of the Northwestern University, Chicago, writes for the American Medical Journal of Jan., 1898, that the following effects of castration on animals are noted. The elk experimented upon did not shed their horns in the following season, as is usual with them, but the old horn remained. The severe weather froze the horn at the tips and these tips came off and then numerous small sprouts came out. These in turn were nipped in the following season and sprouted in smaller parts and this went on until a pair of large nobby bunches of bone stood up on the heads. If protected, these horns would probably attain an immense growth.

The ox. When the calf is castrated he grows to be a larger and taller animal than the bull but his neck and forequarters are thinner. His cerebellum becomes larger than that of the bull and his horns become both thicker and longer. The voice is changed in pitch while lowing but not in bellowing.

The horse grows larger if castrated young and the bridle teeth do not seem to be changed as occurs in the full male.

Sheep. The wethers do not become especially larger. The wool of the ram is, however, much more oily and of less value.

The cat. These animals grow larger and are good mousers. They are fonder of petting.

The capon, castrated chicken, grow larger, the flesh is delicate, the spurs undeveloped, the colored comb and wattles remain small. Some of them develop a nursing instinct and take good care of a brood of chickens.

In general terms, if an animal is castrated young he develops the distinctively male peculiarities in only a slight degree, yet some species produce much larger horns than the perfect male. The ox and gelding do not completely lose their sexual passion, but make frequent efforts to copulate with the females in heat.

Physical effects of castration in man seem to be that if castrated young they grow taller and have larger frames. They are also fatter. The hair on pubes and face does not grow. Cheeks look round and prominent, chin apt to be double, no beard. The voice in boys below age of puberty is about like that of a woman, but after puberty it is found an octave lower than that of the woman. The timbre never attains the richness and flute-like splendor of the adult woman.

Mental effects of castration. If castrated late in life the sexual desires are not abated, but if in early childhood it is practically lost. Eunuchs are charged with special envy and jealousy, but this does not seem substantiated. They are only zealous in their duty of defending the women whom they are in charge of.

Dr. Robert P. Harris, of Philadelphia, in an article on Congenital Absence of the Penis, in Philadelphia Medical Journal of January 8th, 1898, offers the following conclusions among others: The eunuch has usually longer legs, a light pelvis, and is defective in the growth of his chest and arms. His long bones are light and have a larger hollow in them than in the full man. If not taller, he is often very fat, and attains a weight of 200 or 300 pounds.

"A complete antithesis to the Jumpers is presented in the sect of the so-called White Doves or Skoptzi. These are a secret sect in Russia; belonging to the Christian belief, but secretly practicing castration, and believing that thereby they insure purity. They are certainly a wonderful people, with many excellencies, though fanatics in this belief."

An editorial in the Journal of the American Medical Association of October 23d, 1897, concludes that the psychic and physical effects of castration are less pronounced the later in life the operation is performed. The general argument is in favor of great care in performing the operation in women, and a conservatism that has not as yet been practiced.

Castration is hinted at in Mat. xix, 12; Deuteronomy xxiii, 1, two mutilations analogous to complete castration are mentioned.

A castration bill was introduced into the Michigan Legislature providing for the castration of all inmates of the Michigan Home for the Feeble-Minded and Epileptic before their discharge; also for that of all persons convicted of a felony for the third time, and of those convicted of rape, in 1897.

Of the 26 male cases here operated on, 24 were operated on because of persistent epilepsy and masturbation, one for epilepsy with imbecility, and one for masturbation with weakness of mind.

The results of the tabulation show that the cases were at time of operation about half of them under 14, four 16, five 17, two were more than twenty, and the balance of 15. The time since the operation has been in most of the cases some years, but in four the operation has been done within a year. The mortality has been nothing, and the operation is regarded as very safe and simple even with adults, though there has been a high mortality in the aged castrated for enlarged prostate.

In these cases they have been operated on under an anesthetic and some have been circumcised at the same time. A large

number of other cases have been circumcised alone and all with good results.

Two of these cases had large varicocele which was all cut away at the time of castration.

The mental and moral condition was fair in 9, good in 2, and poor in the others ; this has become better in 3 cases and remained unchanged in the rest ; two were kleptomaniacs, and this manifestation has nearly disappeared since the operation ; one was salacious, improved since operation ; one was solitary, not so much so now ; four were passionate and quarrelsome and are now much less so ; one persistently eloped but now never attempts it ; two were gluttonous and remain so ; one was monkeyish and is still much the same ; one was imbecile and is now more so ; four ceased to have fits, though without much mental change, soon after the operation ; the voice remains soft in five cases and is not perceptibly altered in the others. Masturbation has ceased in all the cases but one ; that comes on at times only and lasts for a few days.

In one of the female cases, not included in the 26, masturbation is quite prominent at intervals, but at such times the girl is insane and demented. There has been gain in weight, aside from growth, in all cases but 3. The sexual appetite seems to be now missing in all the cases but 2, and in them appears only periodically. Erections sometimes occur but without erethism except in the instances where masturbation still occurs. No extra growth of legs or body has been noted in these cases, and could not well be, as they are nearly all still in the growing stage and have not as yet shown abnormal size. The temper has been improved in all instances but 4, where it remains unchanged. There is less pugnacity in all the cases, and less of anger, obstinacy and self-will. It seems that the cases grow more sympathetic and altruistic, and in some the emotional nature in general is better balanced and more nearly normal.

In all these cases the written consent of the parents has been obtained.

This class of work has been very little done anywhere, as public opinion has been much against it, and even among medical men no encouragement has been given until recently.

The effect upon the epileptic seizures appears to have been good in all cases. Some have ceased having the attacks altogether, though one has had an attack after two years of immunity, but it was brought on by over-eating. All the cases have the attacks less often and with less severity.

Only five of these cases have had bromide since the operation and they with diminishing doses, now reduced to five or ten grains once daily. All the others have been without medicine,

except that they have had tonics, such as Co. Tinct. Gentian, and cod liver oil, at intervals.

Fourteen of the cases are Americans, six Irish, one Scotch, one Swedish, the others being of unknown extraction. At present, 17 of the cases still reside in this Institution, 3 are in lunatic hospitals, five are at home with parents, and the whereabouts of one unknown.